



The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

February 18, 2022

Presidents' Conference in Myrtle Beach

By Betsy Huber, National Grange President

When you are reading this week's edition of the Patrons Chain, state Presidents and National Grange Officers will be gathering in Myrtle Beach, SC, for the annual Presidents' Conference. They will have a very full schedule of workshops and training to help them better serve you the members in their states.

Almost all the National staff will be in attendance to provide an abundance of information about programs, available services, and important matters like insurance, IRS regulations, retention of records, the Grange database and membership recognition process, and much more.

As always, the most valuable part of the conference is the sharing among presidents of their goals, challenges, opportunities and desires. Being a State Grange President is definitely a challenge, and it is so helpful to share conversation with your peers to encourage you along the way.

Also, we have planned a special treat! A local historian and tour guide will narrate a trolley tour to Georgetown, SC, following in the path that Oliver Hudson Kelley took on his survey trip through the south, just before he organized the Patrons of Husbandry. Kathryn has done extensive research into Kelley's trip, the locations and people he visited, and has tons of information to share with us Friday afternoon as we visit several stops in the Georgetown area. She is very excited to share with us, and I can't wait to see and hear what she has for us. Stay tuned for Facebook posts and reports later!

Regional Conferences – Not Just for the Youth

By [Mandy Bostwick](#), National Grange Youth and Young Adults Director

Regional conference season will be here before you know it! The purpose of the Grange Regional Leadership Conferences is to have members from the 5 designated regions of the US gather together for fun, fellowship, and educational and leadership training that can be taken back to a Granger's home state; all for the Good of the Order. Regional conferences provide added value for members through educational and leadership training workshops and networking.

These conferences are put in place for each of our members to gain a better understanding of programming, be provided vital leadership training, and to develop a new level of interest for the mission of the Grange and to provide members with vital skills that they can use both in the Grange and in their careers.



Regional conferences are open to **ALL** members and non-members ages 5 and up. These conferences are for everyone - age is unimportant, but your enthusiasm and love for the Grange is needed.

For National Grange Regional Leadership Conferences, Grange states have been grouped into five regions (recently combined Mid-Atlantic and Southeast region to form the Eastern Region). These regions each host their own annual conference, which will include workshops led by National Grange Department directors, community service projects, and/or tours of an area of interest to the host state.

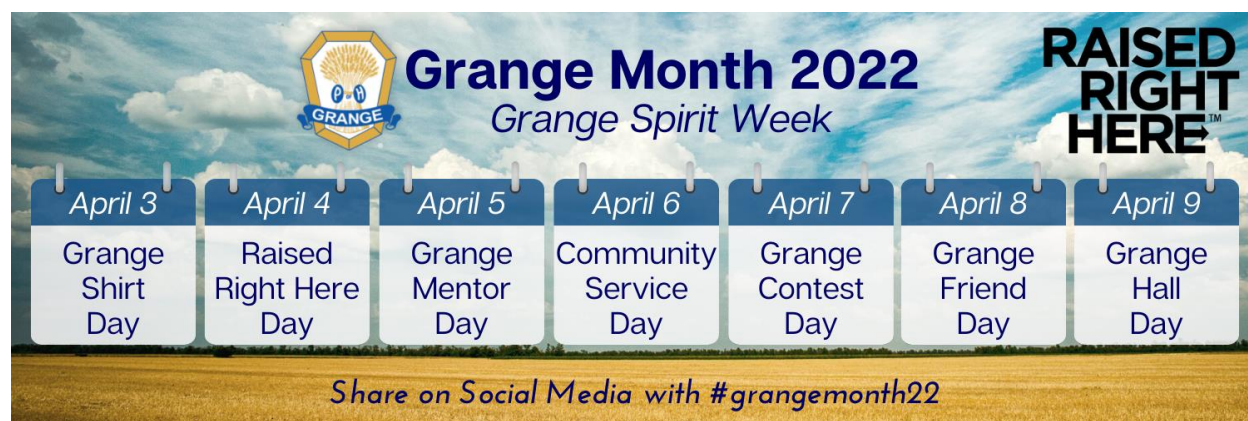
Each regional conference also has the Regional Public Speaking and Sign-a-Song contests. For our Grange Youth and Young Adults and Junior Grangers, we provide opportunities to practice their public speaking skills at each of the conferences and compete in the public speaking and sign-a-song contests. Effective public speaking skills are a vital part of leadership building for all Grangers. Public Speaking skills indicate creativity, critical thinking skills, poise and leadership abilities. These are opportunities for our members that can help them stand out amongst peers when applying for scholarships, colleges, and even on job applications. Check out the different categories for public speaking and sign-a-song, as well as the other regional conference contests in the [Youth](#) and [Junior Handbooks](#). We highly encourage all Juniors and Youth and Young Adults to participate in these contests at regional conferences (*Note: It is not a requirement for participants to first qualify at state to compete at regional.*)

Grange Month Preview

It feels like the year has just begun, but April will be here before you know it. And that means it's time for *Grange Month*. This year, we encourage you to use our National Grange Theme "Raised Right Here" in your Grange Month Open Houses or other programs. Over the next few weeks, we will be releasing social media images, graphics, posters to use in your Grange Hall, and more!

This year, we will be celebrating ***Grange Spirit Week*** April 3 - 9, with a different "challenge" each day.

More information will be available on the National Grange website soon, so please stay tuned.



Heirloom Program Introductory Series on Zoom

In March, the new Heirloom Program kicks off - and we hope each Grange will incorporate it into their meetings as a way to remind seasoned members and introduce new members to values and lessons of the Grange. To prepare, National Membership and Leadership Development Director Amanda Brozana Rios will host several introductory Zoom meetings to provide more details about the program and its use, answer questions, preview future use of the program and brainstorm how Granges may build from this. Several sessions have been scheduled to ensure each member who wants to attend can make time on their calendar. These sessions will cover the same material, so you need only attend one. If you have questions prior to the meetings or if you have not received the Heirloom Program information, brochure and supplementary resource link, please contact Amanda at membership@nationalgrange.org.



RECOGNITION & PRIZE: Each Grange that sends a representative to attend one of the meetings will receive a certificate of recognition and a prize. The State Grange with the highest percentage of Granges attending meetings AND with at least one of the following attending will also receive a prize (President; Lecturer; Secretary; State Communications Director or Newsletter Editor; State Membership Director).

Heirloom Program Materials can be accessed here.



Introducing the...

A Zoom series
with
Amanda Brozana Rios
Membership & Leadership Development Director

Sessions on...

Feb 21 at 7:30 PM
Feb 22 at 10:30 PM
Feb 23 at 8:30 PM
Feb 24 at 9:30 PM
Feb 25 at 6:30 PM
Feb 26 at 3:30 PM
Feb 27 at 7:30 PM
all times Eastern

Meeting ID:
845 1175 6208

Passcode:
364268

or connect
by phone:
301 715 8592

[Join the Zoom Meeting at this Link](#)

Broadband expansion has the money. Now what?

By Betsy Huber, National Grange President, for [Agri-Pulse](#)

After nearly two decades of advocating for high-speed broadband deployment into rural America, National Grange's dream is within reach. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the United States Department of Agriculture, and now Congress via the infrastructure package have committed to ensuring significant rural broadband funding. There's hope to finally reach the last mile of rural America with high-speed internet access. With billions of dollars in funding available, it's time to implement the Grange's dream on the ground.

Project funds must prioritize unserved communities first and the underserved next. With limited funding for these essential projects, we need to avoid overbuilding in some areas while other regions lack fundamental connectivity. There is no need to have two or more providers building out in one area and no build-out in other areas. We can coordinate efforts in a timelier manner by working with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the FCC and USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to help advance current broadband projects.

A crucial tool to build out connectivity will be accurate broadband maps. Updating FCC broadband availability maps will ensure that we understand which regions are already being served. Not only is the management of these projects important but accurate maps are necessary to determine where the true digital deserts are located. Without these maps, true changes cannot be made.

The other element that is essential in reaching the last mile is to have strong public-private partnerships. Private providers have the expertise and experience to deliver efficient and effective project outcomes. State and federal governments can help establish working relationships with their public utilities departments to help accurately target broadband funds to local needs within that state. Once these digital deserts are identified, private providers are then experienced in discerning which types of networks will most effectively and affordably establish connectivity and efficiently deploying these networks. What works for the high plains of Kansas may not be the right fit for the mountains of West Virginia. Providers can utilize any and all existing "middle mile" networks, providing a head start in many regions. We also must ensure fair and equitable rights-of-way and utility pole access to all broadband providers. In many rural areas, whether this lynchpin issue can be resolved will determine if residents get broadband. If all else fails, Congress may have to provide a legislative solution—bad news for communities looking for a quick solution to their problems.

Americans stand at a crossroad. We must achieve widespread connectivity to function in our modern society. Congress has provided the funding to reach this goal, but we need to ensure smart allocation, accurate maps, public-private partnerships and not let this opportunity be squandered. This is a once-in-a-couple generations opportunity. Let's get it right the first time.



Tuesday, February 22, 2022 is “**Twos**”-day (2/22/22) – Will you “celebrate” this holiday with us by giving \$22 to the Grange Foundation in 2022? Your support can make a huge difference to the present *and future* of the Grange.

[Make a gift today!](#)

Join us for the National Grange Legislative Fly-In



Join Brothers and Sisters from around the country in promoting Grange policy priorities and participating in advocacy training. Then, put your training to use as you present your community's concerns to elected officials and their staff.

The Fly-In is one of the greatest ways members can engage in Grange advocacy and remind legislators and regulators of the unique grassroots way in which our policy is developed. Participants will help to tell the story of an organization that is relevant, vibrant, and speaks from and for the heart of America.

Registration is FREE at <http://bit.ly/flyin2022>

Sunday, April 24

Welcome reception at the hotel

***Monday, April 25**

Overview of Washington, Congress and Federal Agencies

How to best work with elected officials and staff

Issue briefings

Speakers from the Hill, government agencies, private industry and think tanks

Tuesday, April 26

Capitol Hill appointments

Champions of Rural America Awards Reception

Wednesday, April 27

Complete Capitol Hill appointments

*Monday's events will be able to be accessed virtually!

More information on speakers, specific issues briefings, and the Champions of Rural America will be released in the coming weeks!

Hotel Information:

Quality Inn Tysons Corner

1587 Spring Hill Rd, Vienna, VA

703-448-8020

"National Grange" rate: \$79/night plus tax by April 1, 2022

More information on the Legislative Fly-In can be found here:

<https://www.nationalgrange.org/national-grange-legislative-fly-in-2022/>

USDA Unveils Resource Guide to Help Rural Entrepreneurs Start and Grow Businesses, Create Good-Paying Jobs and Strengthen America's Economy



United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary for Rural Development Xochitl Torres Small today unveiled a [resource guide](#) to help people in rural America start and grow businesses, create good-paying jobs in their communities and strengthen America's economy.

"America's rural entrepreneurs are critical to the success of our nation's economy," Torres Small said. "They create jobs for the people in their communities, start businesses and industries that expand financial opportunities, and deliver products and services that improve the lives of people across this nation. The guide we are unveiling today will enhance American competitiveness around the world to meet the challenges of the 21st century by equipping rural entrepreneurs with the tools they need to succeed."

The guide features information on how rural entrepreneurs can use USDA and other Federal programs to access financing and other assistance to help start and expand their businesses. It includes tools to help them:

- expand their access to capital to create small business incubators.
- create value-added agricultural products.
- access high-speed internet to connect their businesses to national and global markets.
- cut energy costs.
- access health care resources to enhance the quality of life for their employees.
- access workforce development and training opportunities to improve their skills, products and services, and more.

The guide also features firsthand stories from Rural Development customers on ways USDA programs and services have helped them start or expand businesses.

You can read the complete announcement [here](#).

Donation to SkillUSA to help prepare for trade careers

Tractor Supply Company and Carhartt have donated each \$50,000 for a total of \$100,000 to SkillsUSA. The donation will help SkillsUSA in its mission to serve middle-school, high-school and postsecondary students preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations.

[Tractor Supply sold limited-edition "Support the Trades" Carhartt t-shirts with the proceeds going to SkillsUSA.](#)



Earlier this month, Jeffrey Rietvold, Tractor Supply Vice President/Divisional Merchandise Manager Clothing and Gift, and Keith Reynolds, Carhartt Vice President of Sales joined Chelle Travis, SkillsUSA Executive Director, along with SkillsUSA students and advisors for a check presentation at the Tractor Supply store in Columbia, Tenn.

The students say they have learned valuable life and career lessons through SkillsUSA, and they were excited and thankful for the support of Tractor Supply and Carhartt.

“Because of SkillsUSA I have successfully done so many things,” Kristan Odom, a SkillsUSA alum. “I can’t even imagine where I’d be without Skills.”

An estimated three million trade jobs remain vacant in the US. This donation will help fill that gap. Trade professionals perfectly personify Tractor Supply's Life Out Here lifestyle, and we are proud to support them.

Join us on Zoom for this informational program

Solving the Puzzle of Estate Planning and Long-Term Care

April 6

8:30pm Eastern

Open to ALL Grange Members

Presented by



Meeting ID: 853 2615 8138
Passcode: 864678
Or Dial In: (301) 715-8592



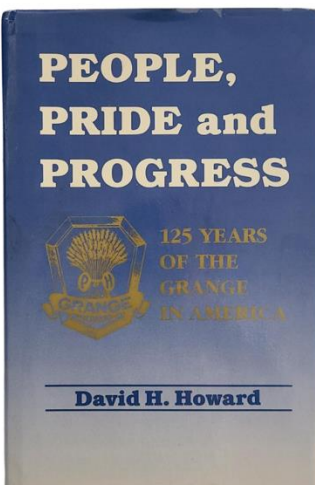
SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org

The story of the Grange over 125 years, chronicled in People, Pride and Progress, is a story of members working to improve the quality of life for themselves and their rural neighbors.

Only a limited number of these books are available – so don't wait!

Order: grangestore.org



PEOPLE, PRIDE AND PROGRESS

**125 Years of Grange
in America**
by David H. Howard

335 Pages
Published in 1992

SALE PRICE: \$6 plus shipping

Get your copy by ordering online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.com or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.

National Grange Member Benefit ***Office Depot Shares the Love this February***

From the most-loved to the must-haves, your Grange Office Depot Savings Program has all you need to keep your work space clean, organized and well stocked.

Open or use your business.officedepot.com account and **save up to 75% off** on Office Depot's Best Value List of preferred products. Compared to the regular retail price offered on officedepot.com. You'll also enjoy **free next-business-day delivery** on qualifying orders of \$50 or more within local delivery areas.*

Shop Now!

Plus, take advantage of the following member-only coupons to help you maximize your savings. Get **up to \$35 off** your next qualifying online order. Offer valid through 02/28/2022.**

\$15 OFF | your qualifying order of \$100 or more.

Use coupon code:
50499378

\$20 OFF | your qualifying order of \$150 or more.

Use coupon code:
24182458

\$35 OFF | your qualifying order of \$250 or more.

Use coupon code:
90801877



Exclusive Savings Just For You

Valid only at **business.officedepot.com** through 02/28/2022. Exclusions apply.



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